



LBJ Country



Lyndon B. Johnson National Historical Park and
Lyndon B. Johnson State Park and Historic Site

No "Sterile Relic" Here: We're Running a Different Kind of Cattle Ranch

Lyndon Johnson insisted that his ranch continue to operate as a progressive enterprise after his death, not as "a sterile relic of the past." The national historical park that bears his name honors his wishes, but also works to keep the LBJ registered Herefords looking as they did when he was on the scene. Healthy cattle supported by the latest ranching practices, yet also history on the hoof: what goes into meeting this challenge?

First, the numbers involved. LBJ kept 350 mother cows. After he died, his ranch foreman selected from those cattle to constitute the park herd, and the line continued in that way. The herd as it is presently constituted includes 65 mother cows, all of them shorter and stockier than their cousins on other registered Hereford ranches--the way these cattle looked 40 years ago.

One man-year of work (365 days times 8 hours) goes into keeping the herd happy. The newborn calves, averaging about 30 annually, are given ear tags. At three months, they must be vaccinated and ear tattooed. At seven months, they are weaned, and a decision is made: do they fit the look of the historic herd or should they be sold? If kept, they are halter broke. Every spring, there are more vaccinations, re-horn branding, and fly control for the entire herd. There is daily feeding and checking for



Lyndon Johnson got into the registered Hereford business in 1951.

Jerry Simon provides the expertise as an LBJ herd bull has his hooves trimmed.

general health, and periodically a bull can expect to have his hooves trimmed. A yearling to three year old will be treated to horn tipping (cutting the horn at its weak point) and weighting (so the horns will curve gracefully) for both appearance and safety reasons.

Then there is the feed to produce. The ranch raises two grasses, coastal Bermuda and sudan. Some of the cattle also graze on land owned by Lyndon B. Johnson State Park and Historic Site, as part of the cooperative management agreement between the state and national parks. The national historical park in turn has helped with the state park longhorns and with equipment needs such as backhoe services.

Watching over the national park operation is Edward Meier, who worked for President Johnson for about two and a half years beginning in

March 1966. He came back as a National Park Service employee in April 1973 and has provided the essential continuity, while keeping the ranch from achieving the dubious "sterile relic" status.

Visitors to today's LBJ Ranch can profit from talking with any member of the ranch crew when they stop at the show barn on the National Park Service bus tour. Twice yearly, these park employees who do the actual ranching take time to assist the park's interpretation at Farm and Ranch Days (in September) and the LBJ Ranch Roundup (April). In this way, another LBJ tradition continues on his ranch: taking pride in the hard work that goes into, and the pleasure that comes from, maintaining--with a constant eye towards improving--a living history lesson.

LBJ Country is published three times per year: October, February, and June.

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Upcoming Events

- ❖ **Hill Country Heritage Day**
--October 12
Join in the fun as expert craftspeople demonstrate time-honored skills. A chuck wagon camp and authentic Western music and cowboy poetry add to the historic flavor in the scenic Johnson Settlement. 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.
New this year: Chisholm Trail brochure unveiling at 11 a.m. Take the free shuttle from the Visitor Center at Avenue G and Ladybird Lane in Johnson City.
- ❖ **A Timeless Christmas in Johnson City**
--December 7
Experience an 1869 Christmas on the Texas frontier and enjoy a 1920s lamplit open house at the LBJ Boyhood Home. 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. Free of charge. Begin at the boyhood home, Avenue G and Elm Street, one block south of Highway 290.
- ❖ **Christmas Tree Lighting and Evening Ranch Tours**
--December 15
Ring in the season with the Johnson family, visit a German farmstead for festive music and holiday treats, and see the LBJ Ranch bedecked in Christmas finery. Free. Meet at the LBJ State Park and Historic Site, two

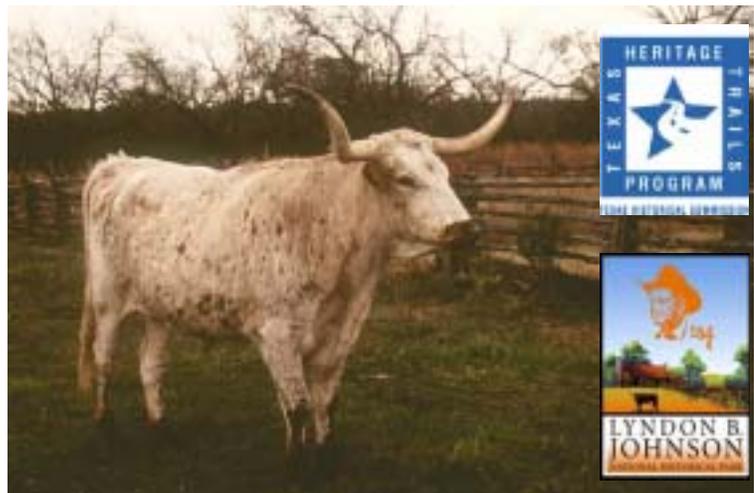
New Chisholm Trail Brochure Features Johnson Settlement

Saddle your horses and dust off your boots! The latest Texas Historical Commission brochure is coming down the trail, and the Johnson Settlement is one of the featured destinations. During Hill Country Heritage Day on October 12, this new brochure will be unveiled with the help of elected officials including the mayor of Johnson City, luminaries from the Texas Historical Commission, and park superintendent Leslie Starr Hart. Members of the Johnson family are also on the invitation list for this Chisholm Trail event, which begins at 11 a.m. on the scenic grounds of the original Sam Ealy Johnson, Sr. dog-trot cabin.

President Johnson's paternal grandparents, Sam Ealy and Eliza Bunton Johnson, first homesteaded in that cabin beginning in late 1867. They had just been married, and Sam saw great opportunity as a partner with his brother Tom in the open range cattle droving business. In subsequent years, Sam and Tom collected longhorn cattle from several counties and organized drives from the settlement to Abilene, Kansas, where the railheads were located. Thousands of head were pointed north and eventually sold at considerable profit. Unfortunately, many other outfits got the same idea, and by 1872 the markets were glutted with beef. The partnership dissolved, and the Johnsons sold out and moved on.

Almost 100 years later, an ex-president who set great store by his family history was on the scene when the national historic site bearing his name was restoring his grandparents' home. Lyndon Johnson so valued that heritage that he wanted the Johnson settlement included in what would become Lyndon B. Johnson National Historical Park. It is the memory of his ancestors and other local ranching families who wrested a living from a hard land that will be honored on October 12. The era itself will be commemorated in the new brochure, more than half a million of which are being distributed state-wide.

All are invited to pay tribute to the men and women of Texas frontier days at the brochure kick-off and then encouraged to stay on and have fun at Hill Country Heritage Day, which continues until 4 p.m. We'll see you there, pardner!



This 100% longhorn steer in the Johnson Settlement is a living reminder of the legendary days of the great Texas trail drives.

Safeguarded Audio Visual Archive Now More Accessible

A ten-week summer project has netted a big improvement in both the preservation and the availability of the park's audiovisual archive. Two conservation interns from the University of Texas at Austin, Dan Paterson and Lauren Streusand, worked to reformat both the oral history collection and the interviews shot for the film *Lady Bird Johnson*. Lauren and Dan also labeled and renumbered all the materials from the other film shown in the park Visitor Center, *LBJ: The President*. In addition, all a-v archival materials were reboxed in compact shelving within climate-controlled storage. The impetus for this project was an archives survey, undertaken in 1998. This summer's work tackled the audio-visual collection; next summer will deal with the paper archives.

Any owner of Betamax tapes or vinyl records knows that old media can become unplayable. Either the software deteriorates or the hardware becomes obsolete, or both. Time is often of the essence in transferring, or "migrating," a-v



Lauren and Dan with the new and the old oral history formats: CD and reel to reel tape.

materials to newer formats. To add challenge, the park collection contains every type of audio and video format, including eight track tapes and something called heliscan video.

Eighty-nine oral history tapes, the oldest ones dating back to the early 1970s, were chosen from the park's collection of approximately 700. The information on these reel to reel tapes was then transferred to CD-ROMs. All of the

interviews in the Mrs. Johnson film were reformatted to DVDs, adding 60 more years to the 15 year shelf life of a VHS cassette.

The project allowed the interns to work in magnetic materials conservation and preservation, a "cutting edge" field in library and information science. While this was the first out-of-class project for both, Dan worked in a research library for five years before enrolling at UT, and Lauren was employed at the Emory University library while in college. Dan will begin a nine-month internship at the Library of Congress in December; Lauren will continue in the UT graduate preservation and conservation studies program for two more years.

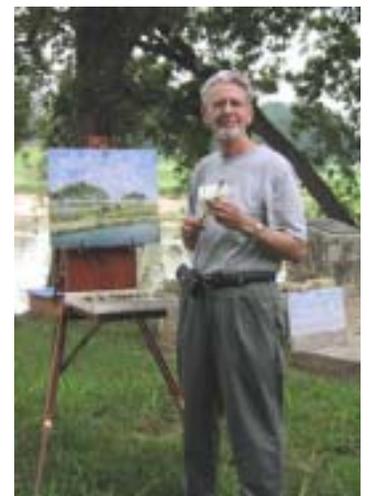
The eventual goal of the park archives project is to aid park staff, researchers, and the public in general by preserving the archives while also making them more available. Lauren and Dan's good work has brought the park much closer to this ultimate goal.

Painter Selects LBJ Ranch As Subject for Art Competition

Marvin Flynn has been painting "in his head" his entire life, but it was only after his second retirement that he had the leisure to take up painting seriously. In the past 3 1/2 years, his work has been in ten national shows, and he will have paintings in Boulder, Colorado, Cheyenne, Wyoming and Clifton, Texas as this newsletter goes to press. Many subjects appeal to him: still lifes, portraits, landscapes.

In August, the LBJ Ranch was his chosen subject matter for submission to the prestigious Arts for the Parks international competition. Held annually since 1987, its goal is to provide a showcase for emerging and established representational artists who have best captured the spirit of the National Park Service. Awards range from \$1,000 in the landscape, marine, and historical categories to a grand prize of \$50,000. Jurors choose one hundred works for a national tour. Each artist can submit several paintings; Flynn may enter depictions of the Texas White House and the reconstructed birthplace (he will definitely enter the landscape seen in the photograph opposite).

The LBJ Ranch was his choice because Lyndon B. Johnson National Historical Park is his favorite of all the national parks he and his wife Johnnie have toured. They both have always admired President and Mrs. Johnson and spend a lot of time revisiting the park. The resultant artwork is, according to the painter, his tribute to the Johnsons.



We wish Mr. Flynn the best of luck and hope he is one of the finalists selected next spring!



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Lyndon B. Johnson National Historical Park
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Lyndon B. Johnson State Park and Historic Site
 P.O. Box 238
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EXPERIENCE YOUR AMERICA



“Hill Country Heritage” Theme of New LBJ State Park and Historic Site Exhibits

Lyndon B. Johnson National Historical Park researches, preserves, and interprets the life and heritage of our 36th president, and in association with the adjacent Lyndon B. Johnson State Park and Historic Site, provides a variety of opportunities to experience the local and regional context that shaped the last frontier president, informed his policies and programs, and defined his legacy.

Lyndon B. Johnson National Historical Park

P.O. Box 329
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Lyndon B. Johnson State Park and Historic Site

P.O. Box 238
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www.tpwd.state.tx.us/park/lbj

The National Park Service cares for special places saved by the American people so all may experience our heritage.



A ribbon-cutting ceremony on August 27 (President Johnson’s birthday) marked the opening of some long-awaited, brand new exhibits at LBJ State Park near Stonewall. These enticing exhibits encourage visitors to explore the diverse cultures and the landscape that shaped the late president’s values and character. Doing the honors are (from left to right) Ian Turpin, Mrs. Lyndon B. Johnson, Luci Baines Johnson, State Park Superintendent Donnie Schuch, and Texas Parks and Wildlife State Parks Director Walt Dabney.